

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

Notice SP-7

For: Maine State and County Offices

Wild Blueberry Producers Approved Under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

Under TAA program, both technical assistance and cash benefits are provided to eligible agricultural commodity producers if an increase in imports has contributed importantly to a decline in price, resulting in a drop in net farming or fishing income.

FAS has determined, based on a petition filed on behalf of wild blueberry producers in the State of Maine, that increased imports of frozen wild blueberries contributed importantly to a decline in Maine producer prices from July 2002 through June 2003 when compared with the previous 5-year average. Therefore, the wild blueberry producers represented by the approved petition are eligible to receive TAA benefits.

B Purpose

This notice provides Maine State and County Offices with:

- information about the FAS certification of petitions filed by Maine wild blueberry producers
- instructions to begin sign-up for Maine wild blueberry producers represented by the FAS certified petition.

2 Maine Wild Blueberry Producers Eligible for TAA

A Approved Petitions

Notice SP-5, paragraph 4, provided the petition review and certification process for groups or individuals acting as authorized representatives of an association of agricultural commodity producers electing to petition FAS for TAA benefits.

Disposal Date	Distribution
January 1, 2005	Maine State Office; Maine State Office relay to County Offices

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2 Maine Wild Blueberry Producers Eligible for TAA (Continued)

A Approved Petitions (Continued)

A petition was filed on behalf of wild blueberry producers in the State of Maine and published in the Federal Register on September 15, 2003. After review and investigation of the petition for qualifying requirements, the petition filed by the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine on behalf of their producers has been approved and certified as eligible for TAA benefits by FAS.

B Notification of Approved Petitions

The approved petition certified as eligible for TAA benefits provided in subparagraph A, will be implemented based on the issuance of a Departmental press release on October 22, 2003. This announcement will start the 90 calendar day application period.

A notice summarizing the petition determination and the reasons for making the determination will be published in the Federal Register as soon as practical.

C Sign-Up Period

Sign-up for TAA benefits for wild blueberry producers covered by an approved petition will begin on October 22, 2003, and will continue for 90 calendar days, ending on January 20, 2004.

Individual TAA applicants shall submit the completed FSA-229, according to Notice SP-5, Exhibit 1, by **COB January 20, 2004**, to the FSA County Office or USDA Service Center nearest the place of residence.

Note: Acceptable production evidence such as, receipts, ledgers, income statements, landing reports, etc., shall be submitted at the time application for TAA benefits is made with FSA, but **no later than January 20, 2004**, to verify the production of wild blueberries produced from July 1, 2002, through June 30, 2003. All other documentation required to receive TAA cash payments must be submitted by COB September 30, 2004.

D Eligible Producers

An eligible wild blueberry producer is a person, as defined according to 1-PL, subparagraph 110 A, who commercially markets wild blueberries and directly or indirectly, as determined by the Secretary, shares in the risk of producing wild blueberries. Eligible wild blueberry producers in Maine may apply for TAA benefits anytime during the sign-up period, according to subparagraph C.

Note: Only FSA-229's submitted for Maine wild blueberry producers covered by an approved petition certified as eligible by FAS will be approved for TAA cash payments.

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2 Maine Wild Blueberry Producers Eligible for TAA (Continued)

E Eligibility Verification

Notice SP-5, subparagraph 5 C, requires County Offices to verify that each TAA applicant is covered by a certified petition. Maine wild blueberry producers applying for TAA benefits may be verified through local Maine blueberry processors by submitting sales receipts, or other marketing evidence from the processor to confirm eligibility.

F Estimated TAA Payment Rate

Based on TAA payment calculation provided in Notice SP-5, subparagraph 7 A, the estimated payment rate for Maine wild blueberry producers, **before proration** of the payment rate if applicable, will be **\$0.028 per pound** of wild blueberries.

G Action

State and County Offices shall:

- begin accepting FSA-229's and acceptable production evidence for TAA applicants
- verify that TAA applicants are covered by an approved petition certified as eligible by FAS
- provide information to wild blueberry producers about TAA program requirements through:
 - over-the-counter discussion
 - newsletters
 - other methods of communication, as applicable.